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The Observatory

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THE OBSERVATORY

THE OBSERVATORY

BY

JAMES PHINNEY BAXTER

ILLUSTRATED

PORTLAND, ME.
STEVENS AND JONES COMPANY
1893

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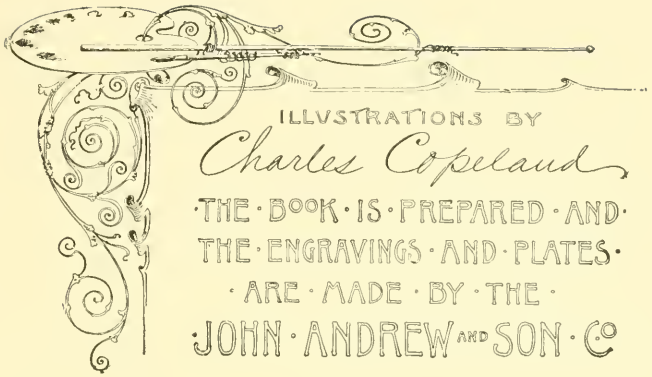
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THE OBSERVATORY.

"Now, what a funny house is here,
Standing so tall,
and straight, and queer,
In a cloak of red,
like a grenadier,
Grandpapa!

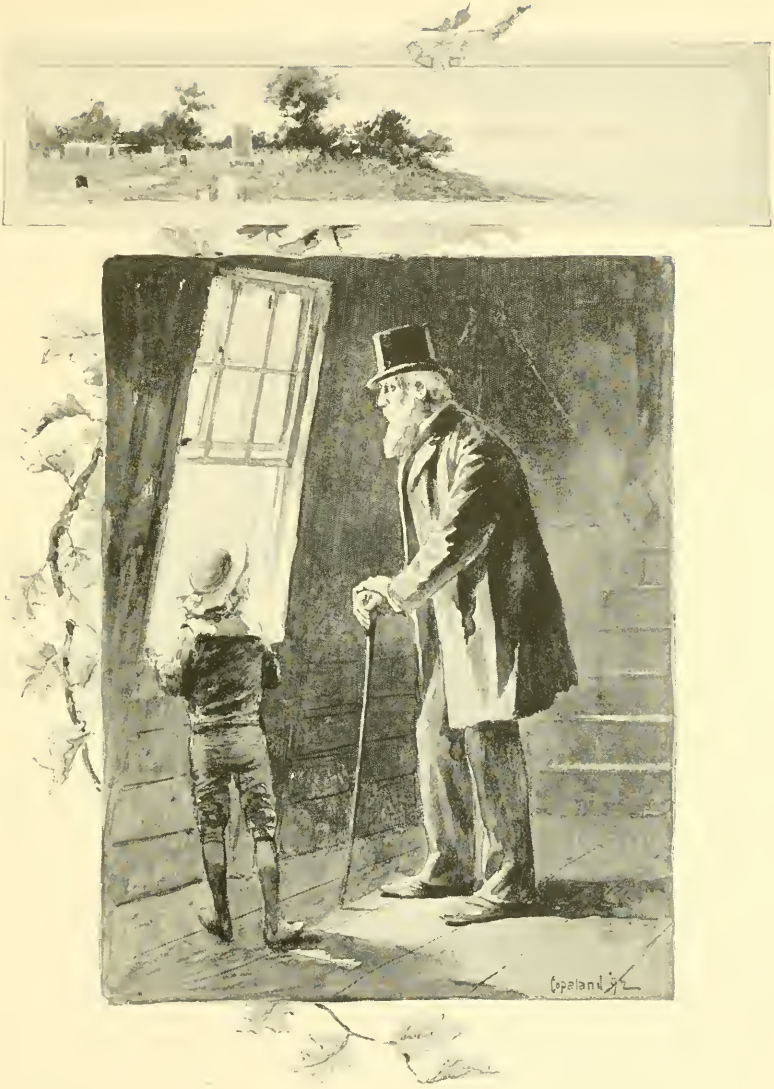
"Did bad men build it
so very high,
That they might climb
to the sky thereby,
And were they punished?
and how? and why,
Grandpapa?"

"Nay, Moody, I'm sure, was a man true blue;
To him and other good men and true,
Shipmasters mostly, its building is due,
Grandson mine.

"They built it so that their ships might be
Espied far off upon the sea,
Returning from voyages long and dree,
Grandson mine.

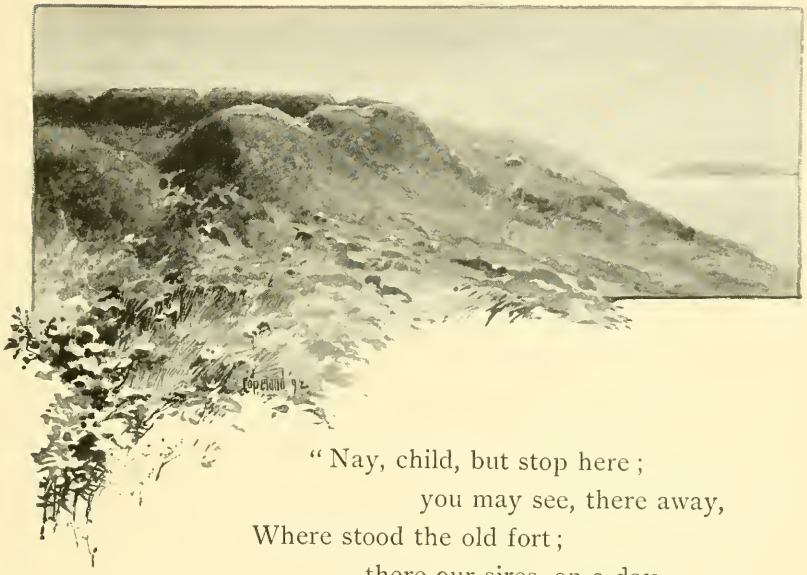
"But let us go in and climb the stair;
Slow! slow! in conning the past, I declare
I had quite forgotten the years which I bear,
Grandson mine."

"Why, here is a window from which I can spy
The burying-ground; and did they all die?
And was it down there that they put them? and why,
Grandpapa?"



"Aye, marry! all died, and some thither they bore,
And some in tall ships to a far-away shore
Sailed grandly from port, and were heard of no more,
Grandson mine."

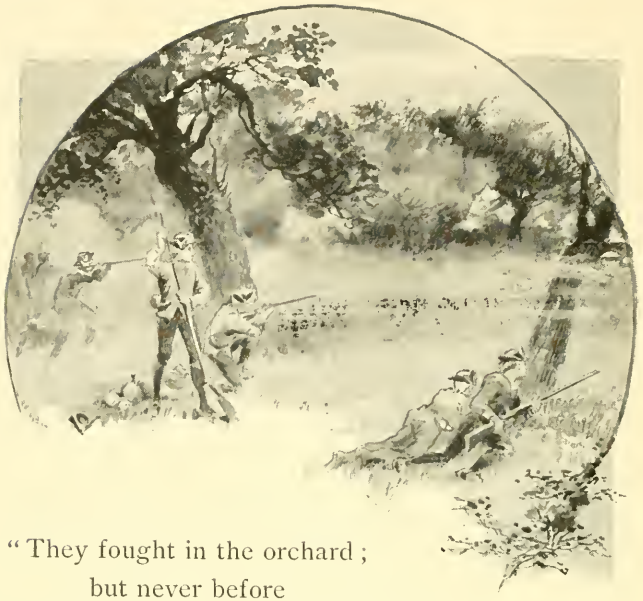
"Now here we have almost climbed up to the sky;
See the spiders, like Indians, so cruel and sly;
And will they be burnt up like bad men? and why,
Grandpapa?"



"Nay, child, but stop here;
you may see, there away,
Where stood the old fort;
there our sires, on a day,
To the Indians gave a grand feast, as they say,
Grandson mine.

"They came single file, the strange creatures, arrayed
In wampum and feathers, and folk were afraid
If their eyes' evil light fell on boy or on maid,
Grandson mine.

"Over there, where the Deering house beams
in the light,
Where the fields are so green, was the great
Indian fight,
On a September day; 'twas a terrible sight,
Grandson mine.



"They fought in the orchard;
but never before
Bore orchard such fruit as on that day it bore,
For Brackett lay there, and of others a score,
Grandson mine.

"But here; and our sires loved the story to tell;
Rode Hegon's mad son, without bridle or sell,
To a terrible fate, which he merited well,
Grandson mine.

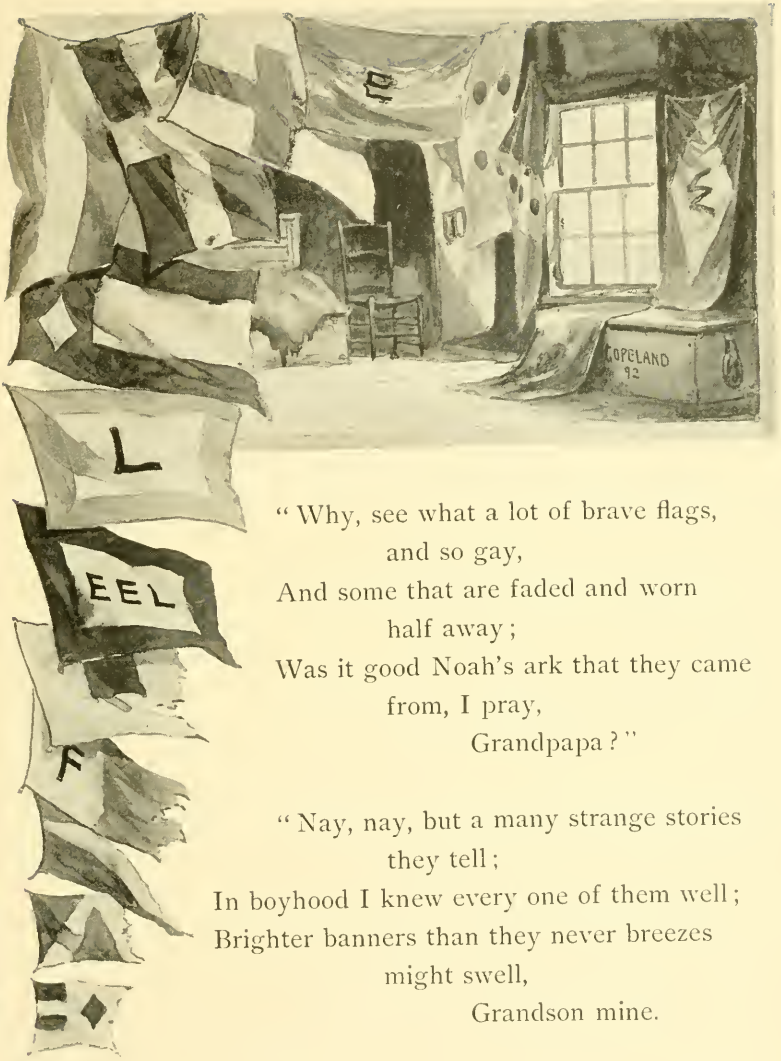
"Brackett's colts, his wild band in the orchard espied,
And their squaws at the sight for a feast loudly cried,
So they caught a fierce stallion by bit never tried,
Grandson mine.

"But their howling young chief 'ere he feasted would ride,
And so to the furious beast was he tied;
A beggarly horseman in spite of his pride,
Grandson mine.

"A whoop! never wolves gave so fearful a yell,
And away flew the steed over field, over fell,
Mad with rage, mad with fear, which no mortal might quell,
Grandson mine.

"Through thickets untracked, with eyeballs aflame,
He plunged, save to tear himself free, without aim;
Mazeppa's wild flight to young Hegon's was tame,
Grandson mine.

"Neither horse nor his rider was seen from that day;
But a moccasined leg was picked up by the way,
And in Brackett's lone cellar was buried, they say,
Grandson mine."



"Why, see what a lot of brave flags,
and so gay,
And some that are faded and worn
half away;
Was it good Noah's ark that they came
from, I pray,
Grandpapa?"

"Nay, nay, but a many strange stories
they tell;
In boyhood I knew every one of them well;
Brighter banners than they never breezes
might swell,
Grandson mine.

"Oh! here is one faded and worn to a shred;
How oft it has told to fair women, long dead,
The coming of loved ones from voyages of dread,
Grandson mine!

"But its owner once sailed on a morning in May;
His mate was a youth somewhat giddy and gay,
Who a sweetheart left watching the ship bear away,
Grandson mine.

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"And she patiently watched for its coming again;
Never signal went up but her eye she would strain
To read it, with hope it were his; but in vain,
Grandson mine.

"And so, for long years, till her brain was quite turned,
And her long hair was white, and her eye wildly burned,
And at last the foul title of witch
she had earned,
Grandson mine.

"And the boys hooted after her 'Coot!'
as the street
She followed with seemingly weariless feet,
Upon fair days and foul, through sunshine
and sleet,
Grandson mine."

"Hurrah! here we are at the top; look! I pray,
See the guns on the fort, and the ships far away!
Will they never come back? and why not? prithee, say,
Grandpapa!"

"Guns and ships! listen well; there Mowat came in;
There his bombship was moored, and the Canceau, to win
But disgrace for him. Oh! 'twas a terrible sin,
Grandson mine,

"On a town full of women and children to fire,
To burn up our homes, leave us roofless, his ire
To appease, and dread winter each day drawing nigher,
Grandson mine.

"Of Burroughs and Blythe they have told you, maybe;
I remember me well, how my heart leaped with glee
At the sound of their guns booming over the sea,
Grandson mine.

"Here I stood on Munjoy; there the sea stretched so blue,
With the Boxer and Enterprise clearly in view,
Each bearing to death her invincible crew,
Grandson mine.

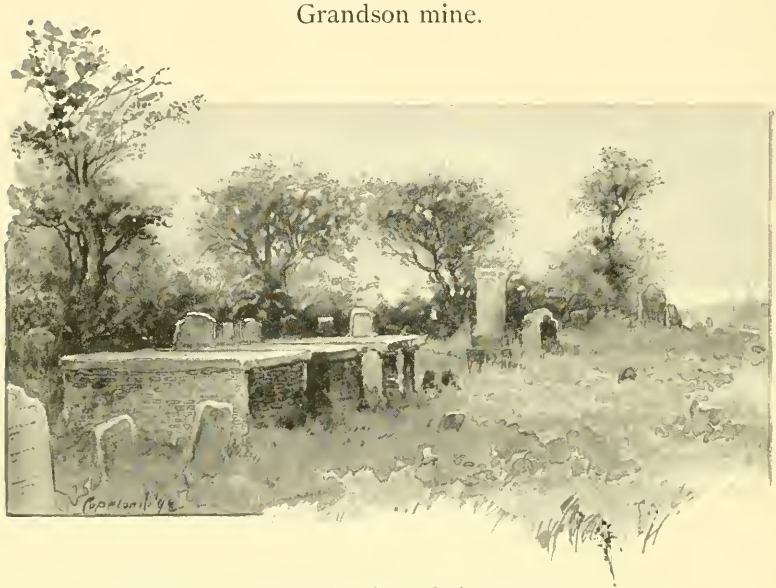
"Puff! a sound like dull thunder came up from the sea;
Another, and then both the ships seemed to be
In a cloud caught away; and it seemed unto me,
Grandson mine,

"Like a horrible dream; why, we spoke not a word,
But at each other stared, scarcely breathed, scarcely stirred,
Thrilled through with each boom of the guns that we heard,
Grandson mine.

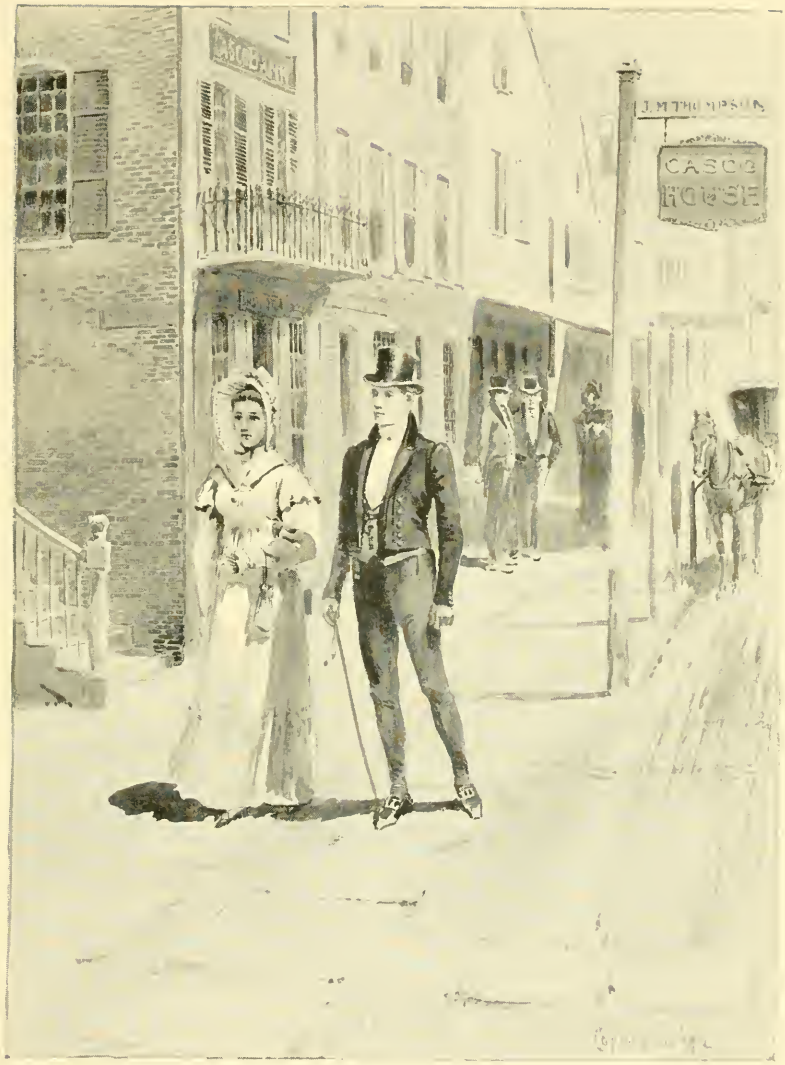
"But it ended at last, and the smoke blew away;
And the two battered hulks in the harbor soon lay
With their captains both dead on their decks, strange to say,
Grandson mine.

"'Twas a glorious time with us boys, aye! the days
Overflowed with events; every one had to gaze
On the brave captains, dead, and their virtues to praise,
Grandson mine.

"Then the funeral came; a grand sight 'twas, I ween.
But alack! a dumb stone, growing slimy and green,
Is all that reminds us to-day of the scene,
Grandson mine.



"And the men so well bred, and the women so rare;
Why, to think of them walking these streets now, so fair,
As of old, fills my veins with young blood, I declare,
Grandson mine."


J. M. THOMPSON
CASCO
HOUSE

"Come! come! let us stay here no longer, I pray;
Let us down to the meadows of sweet-scented hay,
Where the golden-winged butterflies sport all the day,
Grandpapa."

"Aye! aye! lad, 'tis well; let us go, as you say,
Grandson mine;
Let us follow the butterflies bright, while we may,
Pressing hopefully on in the joy of the day,
Grandson mine, little grandson mine."

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